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26 September 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM: Students of the Seminar on Intelligence Analysis

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Seminar on Intelligence Analysis

1. We [redacted] attended the fifth Seminar on Intelligence Analysis from 14 to 26 September 1980. During this period we explored creative analytical techniques, learned new methodologies, and had the opportunity to work in interdisciplinary analytical teams.

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2. In general, we think that the new techniques, especially those dealing with interdisciplinary approaches, produced a relatively high degree of success, even though we were constrained by time and limited resources. The Seminar purposely focused on the processes and not on the results; nonetheless, we believe that the experience gained during the two weeks was valuable for several reasons:

- Association with analysts from all NFAC offices increased our knowledge and appreciation of the variety of disciplines in NFAC.
- The use of several new analytical processes expanded our perspectives and enhanced our objectivity.
- Exercises conducted throughout the course demonstrated that synergism often results in group conclusions that are more imaginative and wider-ranging than individual efforts.

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3. In addition to many advantages of the new methods, we conclude that they are not panaceas in themselves and have to be weighed carefully in considering which approach to apply to any intelligence problem. Some of the concerns growing out of our consideration of these approaches include:

- Group techniques do not apply to all intelligence issues and problems. They work better when issues are anticipatory, long-term, and complex rather than current and time-sensitive.
- Performance evaluation in NFAC is associated largely with individual efforts. A way is needed to recognize individual contributions to group analytical efforts.
- Innovative procedures require the training of participants as well as individual cooperation and receptivity to group analysis. These techniques do not equate to the production of "interdisciplinary" works that consist of the amalgamation of individually-produced segments, or "analysis by staple."
- The methods considered during the Seminar often conflict with our personal mindsets. We believe, however, that reluctance on our part probably can be overcome with experience and with the repeated opportunity to utilize these skills.

4. On balance, we believe that the methods introduced during the Seminar are useful. We suspect, however, that our enthusiasm for these methods and that of NFAC management may not be shared by intermediate-level NFAC management. To encourage further uses of these techniques, we offer the following recommendations:

- Publicize examples of good interdisciplinary analysis as they occur.

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- Conduct SIA at least four times per calendar year with a goal of training at least fifty students in the use of these techniques annually. Up to a third of the students should be branch chiefs to insure that first-line management and analysts share a common understanding of the methods, their limitations, and their advantages.
- Conduct a special, modified version of SIA for NFAC office Directors and Division Chiefs to familiarize them with the new methods.
- Reconfirm for all NFAC personnel your personal commitment to the utilization of these methods by specifying that attendance at these courses is mandatory and that over a period of the next few years all analytical personnel and managers will have attended these courses.
- Create analytical working groups designed to consider specific topics or geographic areas. These groups should include working analysts from all NFAC offices and should be independent of office controls and structures. In this respect, they would be similar to the MAGs, but would be substantive rather than administrative in focus.
- Schedule a one-day refresher session after a period of several months, so that each class of SIA may reconvene to review the practical applications of their lessons, to provide feedback to the OTR staff, and to be updated by the OTR staff on new developments and research in the field of analytical methodology.

5. In conclusion, we believe that these techniques have the potential for revolutionizing the quality of NFAC analysis and for providing the opportunity to do so while using time more efficiently. We believe, however, that because the techniques are new and different, their successful implementation will require the concerted effort of all NFAC personnel.

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